



**Briefing on the African Union  
Commission's efforts to  
Eradicate Statelessness  
PRESENTATION BY HHS**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 18 May 2025

An Integrated, Prosperous  
and Peaceful Africa



# **Overview of the presentation**

- I. Introduction and overview of the Protocol**
- II. Why the Protocol? Africa's Statelessness Crisis**
- III. Key aspects of the Protocol.**
- IV. Harmonizing Laws: The AU Model Law Initiative**
- V. Way forward in popularization, ratification and implementation of the Protocol**

## Introduction and overview

- The AU Protocol on Statelessness (to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Specific Aspects of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa) seeks to eliminate barriers to legal identity by advocating for reforms in legal frameworks to prevent individuals from becoming stateless.
- Adopted in February 18, 2024, at the 37th AU Assembly, it is Africa's first tailored legal framework, complementing UN Conventions (1954, 1961)
- The Protocol represents a significant step towards eradicating statelessness in Africa by introducing specific measures to address the specific issues on the continent.
- Efforts underway to popularize and lead to its entry into force.

## Why the Protocol? Africa's Statelessness Crisis

- The protocol acknowledges Africa's colonial history and its ramifications on statelessness on the continent - Colonial borders (a result of the 1885 Berlin Conference) created stateless communities.
- Post-independence nationality laws excluded minorities, migrants, and nomads.
- Weak civil registration left millions undocumented.
- Limited number of ratification of the UN Conventions, which in themselves did not address the specificities of the statelessness problem in Africa.
- Unique challenges ( e.g. transgenerational statelessness) required African Solutions.
- Supports AU Agenda 2063 for inclusive citizenship.

## Key Provisions of the Protocol

- Right to Nationality- Guarantees nationality by birth and prevents transgenerational statelessness.
- Non-discrimination- Prohibits denial of nationality based on gender, ethnicity, or other grounds and promotes gender equality in conferring nationality.
- Nomadic Populations- provisions specific to the needs of nomadic and cross-border populations affected by the arbitrary colonial borders. (Art. 8)
- Strong due Process- Ensures transparent nationality determination and legal recourse.
- Naturalization- Facilitates citizenship for stateless persons.

# Harmonizing Laws: The AU Model Law Initiative

AU Quotas exploring a model law to align national laws with the Protocol.

- Aimed to establish templates for nationality laws and standardize reforms (e.g. birth registration).
- It will build on the ECOWAS Abidjan Declaration (2015), and ICGLR Brazzaville Declaration (2017) for West Africa and the Great Lakes Region, respectively.
- It simplifies legal reforms for Member States.
- It further strengthens Africa's role in the Global Alliance to End Statelessness.

## Next steps: Ratification and Implementation

15 ratifications required for entry into force; hence AU has prioritized its popularization and advocacy and developed a roadmap covering:

- Awareness Creation and Popularization among the State Parties to the ACHPR and RECs;
- A High-Level Launch of the Protocol;
- Engagement in global policy & public advocacy aimed at Strengthening the global engagement;
- Accelerated implementation by fostering of favorable mechanisms for reduction and eradication of Statelessness.
- A Model Law is currently under discussion at the Pan-African Parliament and will help in the eventual drafting of relevant domestic laws.

## Next steps: Ratification and Implementation

- Engage in resource mobilization to support of the implementation of the Policy.
- AU Commission, UNHCR, and civil society to engage governments and train authorities on Protocol obligations.
- Strengthen systems (e.g., digital IDs).
- Leverage ECOWAS, SADC, ICGLR for momentum.
- AU joined the Global Alliance and has been rallying its MS and RECs to do so. 6 AU MS signed up to the Global Alliance.

Thank you